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S/PRST/1998/31
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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3940th meeting of the Security Council, held on 6 November 1998 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Guinea-Bissau", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the agreement reached on 1 November 1998, in Abuja, between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta during the 21st Summit of the Authority of the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (S/1998/1028, annex). In this context, the Council commends the mediation efforts of ECOWAS and of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), and their respective Chairmen, and recognizes the role of other leaders, in particular the preponderant role of the President of the Gambia, in the negotiations that led to that agreement.

"The Security Council affirms its firm commitment to preserve the unity, sovereignty, constitutional order and territorial integrity of Guinea-Bissau.

"The Security Council considers the agreement to be a positive step towards national reconciliation and lasting peace in Guinea-Bissau. The Council calls upon the Government and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta to respect fully their obligations under the Abuja Agreement and the Praia Agreement of 26 August 1998 (S/1998/825). The Council welcomes, in particular, the decision immediately to put in place a Government of National Unity and to hold general and presidential elections not later than the end of March 1999.

"The Security Council takes note of the agreement regarding the withdrawal from Guinea-Bissau of all foreign troops and of the simultaneous deployment of the interposition force from the Military Observer Group of ECOWAS (ECOMOG), which will take over from the withdrawn forces. The Council calls upon all States to provide voluntarily technical, financial and logistical support to assist ECOMOG to carry out its mission.

"The Security Council appeals to States and organizations concerned to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and refugees.

It calls upon the Government and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta to continue to respect relevant provisions of international law, including humanitarian law, and to ensure safe and unimpeded access by international humanitarian organizations to persons in need of assistance as a result of the conflict. In this regard, it welcomes the decision to open the international airport and the sea-port at Bissau.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of the matter."

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3941st meeting of the Security Council, held on 6 November 1998 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Croatia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the final report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations police support group (S/1998/1004), and in particular his description of the successful conclusion of the police support group mandate and the smooth transition of responsibilities to the police monitoring programme of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Council recalls the commitment of the Government of Croatia to ensure that OSCE police monitors will have the same access to police stations, documents and police operations, including investigations and checkpoints, as that accorded to the United Nations police support group.

"While the overall security situation in the Danube region remains satisfactory and police performance has improved notably and the Government of Croatia has taken steps to ensure that this continues, a worrying trend of ethnically motivated incidents persists in the region. The Security Council remains deeply concerned at the continuing departures of Serb residents, resulting to a considerable extent from these incidents. In this context, the Council is mindful of the importance of economic revitalization and reconstruction in creating an environment for sustained returns. The Council calls upon the Government of Croatia to make every effort to enhance public confidence in the police force and to recommit itself fully to the process of reconciliation between ethnic groups.

"The Security Council also calls upon the Government of Croatia to address the perceived lack of security which is contributing to continuing departures of Serbs from the region, and to remedy a number of problems which are preventing the full implementation of the "Programme for the Return and Accommodation of Displaced Persons, Refugees and Exiled Persons" (S/1998/589). While noting that in his previous report (S/1998/887) the Secretary-General recognized progress in the implementation of this Programme, the Council calls upon the Government of Croatia promptly and fully to address all unresolved issues, which include restitution of

property to Croatian citizens of Serb ethnicity, harmonization of legislation with the provisions of the return programme to enable non-discriminatory implementation, effective functioning of all housing commissions, equal access to reconstruction funding, restoration of rights to socially owned apartments, access to information, removal of impediments to the acquisition of documents needed for returnee status and benefits, and implementation of the law on convalidation.

"The Security Council expresses particular concern about the Joint Council of Municipalities, which represents all Serb ethnic communities in the region and which is described by the Secretary-General as being on the brink of collapse. The Council reiterates the continuing obligations of the Government of Croatia under the Basic Agreement as well as under international conventions and other agreements, and, in this context, stresses the importance of full implementation of the 'Programme for the Establishment of Trust, Accelerated Return and Normalization of Living Conditions in the War-Affected Regions of the Republic of Croatia' (S/1997/772).

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the OSCE, which has now assumed the role of the United Nations support group, and looks forward to being kept informed, whenever necessary, of relevant developments in the Danube region of Croatia.

"The Security Council expresses its deep appreciation to all the men and women who participated in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Danube region of Croatia. Their dedication and perseverance made a significant contribution to regional peace."

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3947th meeting of the Security Council, held on 25 November 1998 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"In connection with the resolution just adopted on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, I have been authorized to make the following complementary statement on behalf of the Security Council:

'As is known, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/1998/1073) states, in paragraph 8: "Despite the present quiet in the Israeli-Syrian sector, the situation in the Middle East continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached." That statement of the Secretary-General reflects the view of the Security Council.'"

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3948th meeting of the Security Council, held on 25 November 1998 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Georgia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, of 29 October 1998 (S/1998/1012 and Add.1).

"The Security Council remains deeply concerned at the continuing tense and unstable situation in the Gali and Zugdidi regions and at the threat of resumption of serious hostilities. The Council demands that both sides observe strictly all their obligations to refrain from the use of force and to resolve disputed issues by peaceful means only.

"The Security Council welcomes the reinvigoration of the negotiations within the United Nations-led peace process. It particularly welcomes the meeting of both sides on confidence-building measures held in Athens on 16-18 October 1998, the largest and most representative meeting of the parties since the military confrontation of 1993, and the increased bilateral contacts between the two sides. The Council strongly urges the two sides to build on this momentum to widen their commitment to the United Nations-led peace process, to continue to intensify their discussion, in particular within the Coordinating Council, and to expand their relations at all levels. The Council also strongly encourages the parties to work together in order to convene a meeting between the President of Georgia and Mr. Ardzinba and to reach agreements, in particular on the return of refugees and measures for the economic rehabilitation of Abkhazia, Georgia, as a concrete step towards easing tensions and leading to improvement in the security environment. The Council reiterates its call to both sides to display without delay the necessary will to achieve substantial results on the key issues of the negotiations, and calls upon them to implement promptly and in good faith their undertakings, so that living conditions for the population on both sides can be improved by practical confidence-building measures.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the deliberate acts of violence against the personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States, including the continued laying of mines which also endangers the civilian population and impedes the work of the humanitarian organizations. The Council demands that both sides take determined and prompt measures to put a stop to such acts, which subvert the peace process, and to ensure that the security environment of all international personnel improves significantly.

"The Security Council welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at improving the security of UNOMIG, approves his proposal to increase the number of internationally recruited lightly-armed security personnel and additional local security personnel to provide internal security to the Mission's installations, and requests the Secretary-General to keep the security of UNOMIG under constant review taking into account the observations contained in his report.

"The Security Council reminds both sides that the continued commitment of the international community to assist them depends on their progress in achieving peacefully a comprehensive political settlement."